

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY HANDBOOK



**FOR
COMMANDERS**



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CORRECTED COPY



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MEMORANDUM FOR: SEE DISTRIBUTION


SUBJECT: Policy on Affirmative Action

1. The most valuable asset of the California National Guard is the human element that ensures a mission and combat-ready force capable of defending the freedoms and values upon which this Country and the State of California are based. Our commitment is to create an organization that recognizes the talents and abilities of California National Guard personnel, irrespective of their race, creed, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or handicap.

2. Our goal is to have a military force that reflects the composition of the California Labor Force. Similarly, our total full-time military workforce composition will reflect the total military force from which it stems. In certain employment categories that require military membership, we are sometimes precluded by federal law from hiring persons because of their age, sex or disability. However, in all job categories without restrictions, all applicants will be considered through fair and equitable policies and practices.

3. The California Affirmative Action Plans for Traditional Military Guard Personnel, Full-time Federal Employees and State Personnel are planned actions to insure that minorities and females are provided optimal opportunities for career advancement. Commanders and supervisors must be aware of the necessity, in light of Affirmative Action goals, to place an accelerated attention on the advancement of minorities. This includes creativity and exercising opportunities to hire and promote those who may have not been previously considered for leadership and supervisory positions.

4. Commanders at all levels will take those actions necessary to ensure that the California National Guard is comprised of qualified capable, motivated, and disciplined personnel who are encouraged to seek training and educational opportunities to use their talents to the fullest. I know you will join me in the pursuit and attainment of these Affirmative Action goals.


ROBERT C. THRASHER
Major General
The Adjutant General

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FOREWARD

This handbook is to assist commanders in the California Army National Guard in understanding their role and responsibilities in the Equal Opportunity Program.

COMMANDER'S ROLE

A commander has two basic responsibilities: the accomplishment of the mission and the welfare of the troops. These are inseparable, but many factors influence the ability to meet these responsibilities. One factor is the commander's responsibility to insure that all individuals in his/her unit receive equal treatment regardless of race, color, religion, sex or national origin. The job then, requires that the commander learn how to carry out these responsibilities for implementing Army policy regarding equal opportunity and treatment. (Resource information is found in Annex A)

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND RETENTION

In order to maintain combat readiness, the commander must retain a large percentage of the units trained personnel. The implications of this are apparent. To a large extent, the success of a leader will depend on his/her ability to take individuals from a variety of racial and cultural backgrounds and create the unity of spirit and discipline necessary to develop an effective fighting force. Failure in this task, could affect the units morale, esprit and efficiency.

INDIVIDUAL AND INSTITUTIONAL DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination is unequal treatment, either intentional or unintentional of an individual or group of individuals by another individual or group of individuals, because of race, color, religion, sex or national origin. This can create an unequal consideration for job appointments, promotions, details, awards, disciplinary actions, training, billeting and work assignments. Individual discrimination is difficult to substantiate unless it is done openly, but is the

easiest to eliminate. Institutional discrimination deals with the organization's policies and procedures. It is usually unintentional and therefore, frequently not recognized as discrimination. This contributes to the difficulty of diagnosing the specific sources of the problem within a particular organization. Even when a specific source is identified however, another difficulty arises: the resistance to change. Old habits that are comfortable are not easily changed.

REVERSE DISCRIMINATION

Unfortunately, some changes that will lower racial tensions by reducing the frustration of minority and female personnel, may at the same time stimulate a "backlash" effect for other individuals. As steps are taken to change discriminatory practices, one can expect to hear charges of "reverse discrimination", this may increase existing tensions. To avoid this outcome, there needs to be a concerted effort to implement changes in such a way, that all members of the unit understand and accept the reasons for the changes. Human relations seminars and training programs will be valuable in assisting commanders in making this transition.

RECOGNIZING UNIT PROBLEMS

In order to correct human relation problems it is necessary first to be aware that a problem exists. It is important to become aware of the ways that a problem emerges, what forms it takes, who it affects, and what impact it has. The more that is known about the situation and the more aware the commander is of the state of human relations in his/her unit, the more effective the remedies can be.

Basically, the procedure for finding out what's happening is simple:

- (1) Listen to the gripes and complaints of subordinates.
- (2) Look into them and determine the facts of the problem by careful investigation.
- (3) Talk over the findings of the investigation with the people who made the complaint.
- (4) Act to correct the basic problems.

The most basic requirement for good leadership is to know your people. Typically a unit will include individuals from a wide variety of backgrounds -- from tenant farm to ghetto, small town to middle-class suburb. Different backgrounds mold different attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions. Also, you are the product of your own background, so you probably find it easier to understand and empathize with others who have had experiences similar to yours. But to know your people, you must develop a sensitivity about their feelings, desires, and opinions. Especially those which are different from your own. The first step in gaining this sensitivity is to learn how to LISTEN.

Listening is an art. Few people are naturally good at listening, and none of us are so good that we can not improve. In gauging the state of human relations in the unit, the commander must learn to listen to discrimination-related complaints of his/her subordinates in as open and objective a manner as possible. The difficulty is that many of the things that subordinates complain about are likely to hit very close to home. They will identify as problems, things that you think could not possibly be true, or things that make you angry or defensive. But arguing, lecturing, attacking, and defending is not listening. The moment you give into temptation and start talking back, YOU STOP LISTENING.

Complaints are a tool for discovering what is happening in your unit. When you listen to a complaint you have an opportunity to learn more about your personnel and their problems. Initially you will not know whether the complaint is valid or not. It may be a simple misunderstanding. Recognize that the individual is "bugged about something" and that in itself is a problem.

LOOK INTO COMPLAINTS

Now that you know a problem exists the next step is the investigation. Your duty is to look into the entire situation thoroughly and objectively. (Suggested Do's and Dont's on the investigative process are found in Annex B.)

COMMUNICATIONS AMONG YOUR PERSONNEL

Differences in background, age, education, sex, race, rank, and economic class can be obstacles to communication between people. Poor communication can lead to rumors, misunderstanding, cycles of decreasing communication and increased hostility. Today, it is difficult for the various cultural groups to communicate as they tend to go their separate ways after duty hours. It is critical that efforts be made to improve communications across these cultural lines.

Through communications people can better understand and respect the cultural differences of others. With understanding, the barriers that kept unit members from performing as a team can be eliminated. Change is often a slow process that requires understanding, patience, tact and a willingness to listen to others. The commander cannot force people to talk to one another, but he/she can lead by example and provide an atmosphere in the unit where individuals feel free to express themselves.

COP-OUTS IN HUMAN RELATIONS

The tendency to cover up is common to everyone. All of us have been guilty of covering up at one time or another. When we do it by shifting the responsibility to someone else and making excuses for ourselves, we are "copping out".

It is especially tempting to "cop-out" on equal opportunity matters. A cop-out gets you off the hook and gets rid of a problem area that is confusing, explosive, and embarrassing. Once a cop-out has been used successfully, it is easy to keep on using it, until like an old pair of shoes, you are not even aware it's there. But, this "success" is an illusion. Side-stepping sensitive issues only allow them to smoulder until a real problem explodes into flame. Additionally, many minority groups have watched their "leaders" cop-out many times and are very good at recognizing a cop-out.

HERE ARE A FEW "CLASSIC COP-OUTS". READ THEM AND PONDER THEM. ARE YOU COPPING OUT?

-- "To me, there is only one color, that's O.D. Green."

-- "I'm too busy to worry about that - take your gripes to the Equal Opportunity Officer."

-- "The only race problem I have is that damn Peterson - if I could just get rid of him, I wouldn't have any problem."

-- "What can I do? They give me all this responsibility, but then they don't give me the authority to do anything about it."

-- "I put a notice on the bulletin board -- if they don't want to read it, that's their fault."

-- "My door is always open, everybody knows that."

-- "A little griping is good for the troops -- it helps them let off steam. It's nothing serious."

-- "There's nothing wrong in my unit -- it's those outside agitators that are stirring up all the trouble."

-- "You can't change human nature."

-- "I'm sure she asked for it, my men wouldn't make remarks without any reason."

-- "They give me the job, but not the people to do it."

-- "Women got no business out here anyway, if they don't like the language, let'm go back where they belong."

-- "I didn't make the rules."

-- "I get along fine with 'em--they don't give me any trouble."

-- "Everyone knows how emotional women are."

-- "I'll send my black platoon sergeant over. He knows how to handle his people."

-- "There's two places where they belong, the kitchen and the bedroom."

-- "Aw, those people are just using race/sex as a crutch to get out of work."

-- "You know why she got a promotion and we didn't, maybe we should wear a skirt."

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND DISCIPLINE

Discipline is an essential element in the development of a highly trained combat ready unit. Disciplinary action can be an important tool for the commander in molding the troops into the quality unit necessary to complete the assigned mission. Troops that perceive discipline as being fair and equal will respond favorably to such action. The role of the commander then, is to insure that discipline is not only dealt out in a fair and equal manner, but that it is also perceived to be fair and equal.

CHALLENGE TO COMMANDER'S

There is nothing more impressive than a group of highly skilled and trained individuals, who have been motivated by mutual respect, performing a difficult task in a very professional manner.

The commander is challenged to use all the tools available at his/her disposal, including the Human Awareness Program, so that ALL the individuals in the unit will have enough pride and esprit to want to make THEIR unit the best in the California Army National Guard.

ANNEX A

LISTINGS OF RR/EO REGULATIONS

1. The following is a listing of regulations that should be maintained on file at headquarters (Brigade and higher):

- a. AR 600-21
- b. DA PAM 600-42 "Unit Equal Opportunity Discussion Outline"
- c. NGR 600-21
- d. NGR 600-23
- e. NGB AAP (Affirmative Action Plan)
- f. CAL ARNG AAP (Affirmative Action Plan)
- *g. Major Command AAP

2. The following is a listing of regulations that should be maintained on file at all units (Battalion and lower);

- a. DA PAM 600-42
- b. CAL ARNG AAP
- c. Major Command AAP

*Each Major Command (DIV, BDEs, DIVARTY, DISCOM, and GROUP) will insure that an Affirmative Action Plan (AAP) will be published in accordance with instructions contained in the CAL ARNG AAP and will be distributed to all subordinate units.

COMPLAINTS DO'S AND DONT'S

1. DO take each complaint seriously. It is serious to the individual, or it wouldn't have been mentioned.
2. DO keep a record of complaints, so you can recognize trends and spot problem areas.
3. DO investigate each complaint or problem area thoroughly.
4. DO keep the complainant informed. Tell him that you're checking on it, and tell him what you found out. If the complaint was not valid, you may clear up the misunderstanding which led to the complaint. If the complaint is valid, inform the complainant as to what is being done or will be done to correct the situation. By keeping the complainant informed, you assure them someone does care and does listen.
5. DO NOT argue with or belittle the complainant. You will not know whether he is right or wrong until you have checked it out.
6. DO NOT merely accept a complaint and then forget it. The complainant is not going to forget it.
7. DO NOT pass on your findings to "the proper authority" and forget about it. Keep track of what is being done about it, press for action where action is needed. The complainant has the right to expect this of you.